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## **UN condemns Labor's new NT Intervention laws**

28/8/10 for immediate release

A report released overnight by the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has again condemned the NT Intervention as discriminatory.

This despite recent changes to the legislation from the Labor government that purported to bring the Intervention into line with the Racial Discrimination Act.

Barbara Shaw from the Intervention Rollback Action Group in Alice Springs helped launch the original complaint to the CERD with other people from Prescribed Areas in 2009.

She says that Labor's new laws will perpetuate racism and reiterated calls for the Intervention to be scrapped.

"People from Prescribed Areas put this complaint together with human rights lawyers after we had our lives torn apart by the Intervention. It's shameful and disgusting the way Aboriginal people are treated in this country. The Racial Discrimination Act has been suspended three times, each time to oppress our people. Under Labor's new laws it is still suspended here in the NT so the government can control our lives and our lands and force assimilation".

"We have said clearly from the start these laws aren't 'special measures' - they are designed to dispossess and disempower Aboriginal people. As the report points out we have lost land, property, employment, legal rights and opportunities for cultural development. Our standard of living has gone backwards. But Labor refused to listen and has continued with the Intervention largely unchanged."

"Now they are talking about putting all Centrelink recipients in the NT into the Income Management system which will just mean that more people suffer. How can the government justify spending \$350 million on Income Management, when as the CERD points out, we continue to be denied the services and employment opportunities needed to enjoy basic human rights?"

"This report confirms that racism is entrenched in Australia. But all we were offered from Liberal and Labor during the election was more tokenism. The Constitution needs to be changed to protect our basic rights, not to give us a passing reference in the preamble. It needs to embed the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People."

"We hope that the Liberals don't form government to inflict more radical racism on our people. But Labor cannot sustain their support for the Intervention. Running for the Greens in the seat of Lingiari, I clearly outpolled both Labor and Liberal in Aboriginal communities in Central Australia. People have had enough and desperately need change.

"Both MP Warren Snowden and Minister for Central Australia Karl Hampton have said the Intervention can not continue in this way. The first order of business for the new government must be to repeal Intervention laws and reinstate the RDA immediately".

"This latest CERD report is an endorsement for our fight against the Intervention and we will continue build a movement that no government can ignore", concluded Ms Shaw.

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